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HSC BRIEFING

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EAST GERMANY

- I. Last week Ulbricht purged three leading members of the regime (party number two man Karl Schirdewan, party theoretician Fred Oelsner, and former security chief Ernst Wollweber: none under arrest).
- A. Purge climaxed long dispute between Ulbricht, who favors hard Stalinist line, and group of top-ranking party members who wanted regime to follow more moderate policies.

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II.

- A. Opposition motivated by:
1. Realization that Ulbricht's oppressive policies would only lead to increased unrest and offered no solution to East Germany's economic ills and
 2. Ulbricht's arrogant and high-handed behavior.
- B. Ulbricht will probably extend purge as he moves to enforce his policies.
- C. He is now free to bring economy more directly under state control and speed up production.

- III. Effect will be to create atmosphere conducive to strikes, disorders.
- A. Disturbances equalling 1953's uprising not expected.
- B. Efforts will probably be made to halt refugee flow, including restrictions on entry to Berlin, probably not to extent of seriously jeopardizing Western position in Berlin.

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- IV. Ulbricht's mandate to impose Stalinist policies reflects Kremlin's fear that relaxation in this Westernmost Satellite would lead to disaster.**
- A. Soviets fear revolt in East Germany more than in any other Satellite.**
 - B. Strong factor motivating USSR's German policy is continuing state of unrest in Eastern Europe.**
 - C. Finally, Ulbricht's continuation of hard-line policies further illustrates rigidity of Kremlin's position on German issue.**
 - 1. Soviet policy is obviously to maintain status quo by whatever means necessary.**

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